

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PRAGUE 1416

USIA FOR IEU

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PENS PINT SHUM CZ
SUBJECT: WELL-KNOWN CZECH ARTIST'S VIEW OF CHARTER 77, PRAGUE
CULTURAL SCENE

1. JIRI KOLAR, INTERNATIONALLY KNOWN VISUAL ARTIST, RECENTLY DISCUSSED CURRENT PRAGUE CULTURAL-POLITICAL SCENE WITH PAO AND WIFE OVER A BOTTLE TO ITALIAN WINE IN KOLAR'S PRAGUE APARTMENT. KOLAR, C. 70, SIGNED CHARTER 77 BECAUSE OF LONG-STANDING FRIENDSHIP WITH PROF. JAN PATOCKA, CHARTER SPOKESMAN. SAID LATTER WAS A PERSON OF GREAT INNER STRENGTH AND CONVICTION AND VACLAV HAVEL, HIS TEMPORARY SUCCESSOR, HAD REPUTATION AS BEING A SELF-PROMOTION CAREERIST WHO, UNDERSTANDABLY, KNUCKLED UNDER PRESSURE OF SEVERAL MONTHS INTERROGATION IN A PRAGUE JAIL. SAID SOME "OLD COMMUNISTS" IN CHARTER MOVEMENT HAD MORE ENDURANCE, OWING TO PREVIOUS JAILINGS AND EXPERIENCES IN DEALING WITH POLICE. PREDECTED NEW WAVE OF POLICE ACTIVITY URGING CHARTER SIGNERS TO RENOUNCE THEIR SIGNATURES "LIKE YOUR FORMER SPOKESMAN, VACLAV HAVEL, HAS ACKNOWLEDGED HIS ERROR." COMMENT: HAVEL ADMITTED POSSIBLE ERROR, BUT DID NOT RENOUNCE HIS SIGNATURE. END COMMENT.

2. MRS. KOLAR SAID COUPLE RECENTLY RECEIVED VISIT FROM
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HIGH-LEVEL MINISTRY OF INTERIOR FUNCTIONARY, RETURNING HER DRIVER'S PERMIT, WHICH SHE SAID "I MANAGED TO OBTAIN FROM POLICE." BOTH KOLAR'S AND WIFE'S DRIVING PERMITS WERE TAKEN BY POLICE SHORTLY AFTER CHARTER APPEARED, ALTHOUGH MRS. KOLAR DID NOT SIGN DOCUMENT. MINISTRY OF INTERIOR REPRESENTATIVE REPORTEDLY SAID HE WOULD "DO WHAT I CAN" TO HELP KOLAR BE ALLOWED TO TRAVEL AND EXHIBIT ABROAD IF LATTER

AGREES NOT TO PARTICIPATE IN ANY MORE CHARTER ACTIVITY. KOLAR, WHO IS OLD, AND IN ILL HEALTH, SAID HE AGREED, TELLING MINISTRY OF INTERIOR REPRESENTATIVE HE CONTINUED TO ADMIRE CHARTER'S AIMS, BUT WAS NOT A POLITICAL ACTIVIST, AND ADMIRATION FOR HIS FRIEND PATOCKA WAS HIS FIRST REASON FOR SIGNING. KOLAR IS PRESENTLY PREPARING A MAJOR WORK, "HOMMAGE TO JAN PATOCKA". SAID HE WAS CHARTER AS A "BEAUTIFUL EFFORT" THAT WILL ENDURE DESPITE GOC EFFORTS TO DIMINISH ITS IMPACT.

3. KOLAR NOW IS ENGAGED IN DISCUSSIONS WITH ART CENTRUM, GOVERNMENT ART EXPORT AGENCY, ABOUT A ONE-PERSON SHOW AT KNOX-ALBRIGHT GALLERY IN BUFFALO, NEW YORK, AND OTHER MAJOR AMERICAN MUSEUMS. KOLAR HAD A SIMILAR SHOW AT GUGGENHEIM IN NEW YORK IN 1975. ART CENTRUM HAS TURNED DOWN THE MUSEUM'S REQUEST FOR TEN NEW WORKS BY KOLAR TO BE THE CENTER OF THE SHOW. KOLAR BELIEVES "MAYBE THEY WILL LET ME SEND SOMETHING NEXT YEAR." PAO RECENTLY GAVE COPY OF MUSEUM DIRECTOR'S LETTER TO FOREIGN MINISTER CHNOUPEK TO 6TH DEPARTMENT CULTURAL REPRESENTATIVE JAKUBIK, WHO PROFESSED IGNORANCE OF MATTER.
BYRNE

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